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DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGIES

Options for technology information centres and networks

Note by the secretariat

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. By its decision 9/CP.3,[1] paragraph 2 (b), the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat to consult with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other relevant international organizations, "on their capabilities and abilities to support the work of (an) international technology information centre(s), as well as national and regional centres, and to enhance support for national and regional centres and to report to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation on its findings".

2. Decision 9/CP.3, paragraph 3, requests the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) to consider options for funding (an) international technology information centre(s) and enhancing support for national or regional centres. Decision 9/CP.3, paragraph 4, further requests the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to forward any conclusions regarding technology information centres and enhancing support for national or regional centres to the SBI for its consideration.

3. In its consideration of decision 9/CP.3, the SBSTA may wish to recall that by decision 11/CP.1, paragraph 2 (b), the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies should identify ways and means of operationalizing the transfer of technology under Article 4.5 of the Convention.

B. Scope of the note

4. This note describes the results of consultations by the secretariat with the GEF and other relevant international organizations. It describes possible options relating to (an) international climate technology information centre(s), as well as enhanced national and regional centres, including: a plan for information dissemination; the types of information services to be provided; sectoral coverage; organizational structures and lead institution(s); and levels and sources of funding.

5. This note should be read in conjunction with the progress report on technology transfer (FCCC/SBSTA/1998/5), which includes a list of questions international organizations were asked to address. Further background information is provided in document FCCC/SB/1997/4 (which contains a summary of an expert meeting arranged by the secretariat on a plan for technology information centres and networks), and document FCCC/SBSTA/1997/10 (which describes current activities relating to centres and networks supported by international organizations, Annex II Parties and developing countries). Information on the results of the

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[1] For the full texts of decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its third session, see document FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1.

technology needs survey, including technology information needs, can be found in document FCCC/SBSTA/INF.5.

6. In addition, Parties may wish to review the submissions from Parties on this subject (FCCC/SBSTA/1998/MISC.4).

C. Possible action by the SBSTA

7. In the context of decision 9/CP.3, the SBSTA may wish to:

(a) Consider the need to establish a dedicated information system, comprising (an) international technology information centre(s) as well as enhanced national and regional centres, for the dissemination of information on environmentally sound technologies and know-how in support of the Convention;

(b) Consider the functions, types of services and sectors to be covered by (an) international technology information centre(s) and provide guidance for consideration by the SBI on the financial and institutional arrangements for such (a) centre(s) and networks;

(c) Provide guidance on needs and possible means of enhancing the capacity of national and regional information centres in non-Annex I Parties; and

(d) Consider ways and means to operationalize an international technology information centre or centres as well as enhanced national and regional centres.

II. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

8. The secretariat sent letters to the GEF and six other international organizations, as described in the progress report to the eighth session, on the development and transfer of technologies (FCCC/SBSTA/1998/5). In accordance with decision 9/CP.3, the secretariat requested the GEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to provide "information on their capabilities and abilities to support the work of (an) international technology information centre(s), as well as national and regional centres, and to enhance support for national and regional centres". The full responses of these organizations will be made available at the eighth session. Key aspects of the secretariat's consultations are summarized below and in the annexes.

9. Regarding financing for the staff or activities of international organizations or other international bodies, Parties may wish to recall that initial guidance by the COP to the GEF, in

the context of programme priorities and enabling activities, states that "activities aimed at strengthening research and technological capabilities for the implementation of the Convention in developing country Parties should be supported through international and intergovernmental efforts" (FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add.1, decision 11/CP.1, para. 1 (b) (ii)).

A. Consultations with the Global Environment Facility

10. The secretariat sought information on the funding experience of the GEF as it relates to the centres and networks concept, as well as on the current conditions required for GEF support. The response of the GEF is contained in annex I below. Two main points for consideration have emerged from the secretariat's consultations with the GEF.

11. The first point for consideration is that the GEF has indicated it "does not provide budgetary financing for the staff or activities of international organizations or other international bodies to fulfill their own mandates, even those concerned with the global environment".

12. The second point for consideration relates to the interpretation of guidance by the COP to the GEF (decisions 11/CP.1 and 11/CP.2[2]). The guidance gives priority to activities which:

(a) Relate to Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention;

(b) Are country driven and in conformity with, and supportive of, national development priorities;

(c) Are consistent with and supportive of internationally agreed programmes of action for sustainable development;

(d) Transfer technology that is environmentally sound and adapted to local conditions;

(e) Are sustainable and lead to wider application;

(f) Are cost-effective;

(g) Strive to leverage other funds.

13. The secretariat's consultations with the GEF indicate that GEF support for the concept of (an) international technology information centre or centres depends on the interpretation of the "country driven" criterion. The GEF may assign funding priorities to those centres and network activities proposed by specific groups of Parties.

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[2] For the full texts of decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its second session, see document FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1.

B. Consultations with other international organizations

14. Summaries of the responses of five international organizations (FAO, UNEP, UNIDO, WHO, WMO) to a letter from the secretariat are listed in annex II below.

15. Two organizations (UNIDO and UNEP) indicated that they each could act as the focal point for an enhanced international technology information network, in collaboration with other international partner organizations. Two organizations (WHO, WMO) indicated that they would be willing to collaborate as focal points in specific areas. FAO described its current related activities.

16. The specific proposals made by international organizations as they relate to sectors and partner organizations are summarized in the table below.

International organizations: sectoral coverage and collaboration

Organization	Proposed 'in-house' sectoral coverage	Proposed specific collaboration partnerships
FAO	• Agricultural focal point	
UNEP-Industry and Environment	• Environmentally sustainable technologies for industry products and processes with particular focus on mitigation technologies • Waste management	• IETC (Japan) focusing on environmentally sound technologies for urban and freshwater management • RISØ-UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment (according to expertise) • TERI (according to expertise)
UNIDO	• Focal point for industry-related activities directed at reducing industrial greenhouse gas emissions	• UNEP (Cleaner Production Centres programme)
WHO	• Health focal point	• Inter-Agency Network on Climate and Human Health (INCH) comprising the WMO, UNEP and FAO (tentatively)
WMO	• Hydrological and agricultural focal points (others could be considered)	• FAO, UNEP, UNESCO and International Agricultural Research Centres under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research system

III. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

17. Parties may wish to consider separately options related to:

(a) (An) international technology information centre or centres; and

(b) Needs and possible means for enhancing capacity of national information centres in non-Annex I Parties.

18. A review of information systems to support major international environmental agreements reveals the absence of a specific technology-oriented focal point or network in the case of the UNFCCC.[3] While there are several technology-related centres and networks at the regional or economic grouping level (e.g. International Energy Agency/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (IEA/OECD),[4] the Group of Seven (G7)[5] and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC),[6] at the international level, including developing countries, no dedicated information system exists for the dissemination of information on environmentally sound technologies and know-how in support of the Convention.

19. Currently, information about environmentally sound technologies and know-how is disseminated through a variety of informal and, in some cases, formal mechanisms. There are many examples of national, and sometimes regional, information systems and other dissemination mechanisms (newsletters or informal human networks) to support dissemination of information on different aspects of environmentally sound technology. Various national and international information systems and networks also support individual topics (such as renewable energy technologies, coastal zone management).

20. According to the results of the technology needs survey (FCCC/SBSTA/1998/INF.5), a majority of the non-Annex II Parties which responded give high priority to the enhanced provision of information on technologies as one mechanism to overcome barriers to technology transfer. The survey includes substantial information on the technology information needs of over 60 Parties.

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[3] *UNEP Survey of Information Systems Related to Environmentally Sound Technologies*, UNEP, April 1997.

[4] The secretariat participated in the third Energy and Environment Technology Information Centre executive committee meeting held in Finland on 25 and 26 February 1998. The secretariat requested GREENTIE to consider approaches to widening the scope of its product/vendor database to include vendors from developing countries. As at 1 May 1998, the secretariat had not received a formal response.

[5] The G7 environment and natural resources management project includes the GELOS system - an electronic library of environmental information.

[6] APEC has established an Industrial Science and Technology Working Group which considers, among other things, environmental technologies.

A. Options for (an) international technology information centre(s)

21. Taking into consideration the responses from international organizations as well as their documented experience of environmental information systems,[7] the main options for consideration relate to:

(i) A plan for information dissemination;

(ii) The types of information services provided;

(iii) Sectoral coverage;

(iv) Organizational structures and lead institution(s); and

(v) Levels and sources of funding.

(i) A plan for information dissemination

22. On-line electronic communication is gradually replacing printed papers as the principal dissemination mechanism for advanced information systems. Many national, regional and international environmental information systems have some form of Web site. However, hard copy newsletters are still frequently used as a supplement. Key options for dissemination mechanisms include:

(a) Assigning priority to the delivery of on-line information services;

(b) Providing targeted 'off-line' coverage (for example, diskettes, CD-ROMs, hard copy newsletters) to countries and regions with poor access to on-line services;

(c) Providing a supplementary hard copy newsletter describing developments in the international information system/network, and the national and regional centres and networks; and

(d) Developing a strategy to provide guidance for the endorsement of existing focal point technology newsletters (existing forums which specialize, for example, in solar photovoltaic or advanced coal combustion technologies).

23. The formulation of a plan for information dissemination must take into account the status and outlook regarding complementary activities to enhance national and regional centres and networks.

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[7] Two main sources are (a) *'The transfer of ESTs: the role of information systems'*, UNEP-IE, Commission on Sustainable Development, sixth session, 20 April-1 May 1998, background paper No. 20, and (b) the *UNEP Survey of Information Systems Related to Environmentally Sound Technologies*, UNEP, April 1997.

(ii) Information services

24. The core objective of the technology information centre(s) is to enable fast access to high quality information on the latest environmentally sound technologies and know-how in support of the Convention. The main tasks relating to the provision of information services through (an) international centre(s) include:

(a) Establishing a home Web site to serve as the main gateway to the enhanced environmentally sound technology information network in support of the Convention;

(b) Deciding on the breadth and depth of desired outreach: the scope of sectoral coverage and the level of expertise supported in each focal area;

(c) Determining the extent to which delivery of certain information services (e.g. databases of vendors/suppliers of technology) may be achieved through alliances between the coordinating centre and existing suppliers of technology information (for example, a formal alliance with a geographically expanded IEA/OECD GREENTIE initiative);

(d) Supporting a query or 'clearinghouse' service where users can obtain answers to specific questions; and

(e) Defining an overall mission that, *inter alia,* could consider the extent to which information services in the form of training and analysis would be provided.

25. Beyond these tasks, there are several important parameters which relate to the way in which such services are delivered. The effectiveness of the international technology information centre(s) will be critically dependent on their ability to (a) simplify users' access to information on climate relevant technologies; and (b) provide 'user-tailored' services, directly relevant to users' needs.

26. A UNEP-IE paper,[8] in considering the role of information systems in support of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs) concluded that the main barrier to more effective dissemination of ESTs "was not the lack of, or difficulty in accessing information but rather a disjuncture between the information supplied and its demand" (para. 20). The paper also concluded that there was a need to improve links between information systems as well as to develop better complementarity in the information provided.

27. The power of greater access to on-line information is becoming diluted by the volume of information available on the Web. Both the number of links per Web site and the use of different terms for the same technology are growing.

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[8] *'Transfer of ESTs: the role of 'Information Systems'*, UNEP-IE, Commission on Sustainable Development, sixth session, 20 April-1 May 1998, background paper No. 20.

28. Screening of information by sectoral/technology experts may improve the overall effectiveness of the centre(s). However, in seeking to use high quality information sources, the centre(s) will need to pay particular attention to the need to maintain 'neutrality'. Simplification may be achieved through expert assistance and guidance to users.

Two important components of a 'user-tailored' information services strategy are:

(a) User identification and feedback mechanisms; and

(b) An emphasis on "transactional" communication enabling users to communicate between themselves regarding their technology needs and experiences.

(iii) Sectoral coverage

29. Options concerning the scope of sectoral coverage (or in some cases specific technologies/processes) are interdependent with the level of support and the mechanism for financing such (a) centre(s).

30. In the event of a decision to establish (an) international technology information centre(s), it is likely that any such centre(s) would develop on an incremental basis beginning with the core competences and expertise of the host organization and its collaborators. Parties may therefore wish to consider which mitigation/adaptation areas should be given initial priority, that may, in turn, affect choices relating to where such (a) centre(s) is (are) established.

(iv) Organizational structures and lead institution(s)

31. A natural structure has emerged from the responses of international organizations on their capabilities and abilities to support the work of (an) international technology information centre(s), as well as national and regional centres.

32. This natural structure is that of an enhanced information system for the dissemination of information on environmentally sound technologies and know-how in support of the Convention. It would comprise a main collaborating information centre coordinating with a number of other international/regional focal points. These focal points would be chosen from the network of existing institutional capacity and expertise in specific/priority mitigation and adaptation areas.

33. Considerable institutional capacity to provide information systems in support of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and know-how already exists. Much of this capacity is distributed among relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, and the national and regional networks which they serve. The responses indicate that enhancing coordination among these organizations is possible, and would deliver considerable benefits to all Parties at moderately low cost. Such coordination, principally through the establishment of focal points, would enhance and facilitate Parties' access to information on environmentally sound technologies and know-how.

34. UNIDO and UNEP-IE (Paris) have both indicated they could act as the lead institution.

35. Other possible arrangements concerning lead institution(s) would arise in the event of a bilateral funding agreement.

36. Whatever arrangements concerning organizational structures and lead institutions(s) may be decided upon, the SBSTA may wish to recommend that the centre(s) should operate as (a) 'collaborating centre(s)' in relation to the secretariat. In this way, the secretariat could provide overall guidance in relation to the policies, priorities and activities of the centre(s).

(v) Levels and sources of funding

37. The international organizations consulted by the secretariat were not able to provide detailed costings at this stage. Some indicative costs were cited, ranging from $250,000 to cover one focal point (the proposed Inter-Agency Network on Climate and Human Health), up to $3 million dollars per year to provide a full coordinating technology information service with global coverage (UNEP OzonAction Programme).

38. A further example of the funding requirements for technology information centres is the IEA Energy and Environment Technology Information Centre (EETIC) Implementing Agreement. The total direct costs to operate the three jointly financed information centres under the EETIC Implementing Agreement (Caddet Renewable, Caddet Energy Efficiency and GREENTIE) are of the order of $1.5 million per year. Staff costs amount to around three quarters of this expenditure. However, this figure does not include the significant additional contributions (estimated to be approximately a further $1.5 million) made indirectly by EETIC member country governments to support the work of the national teams who in turn assist in the preparation and dissemination of information.

39. Budget requirements are interdependent with the priorities and strategies with respect to the options outlined above. Funding requirements are particularly sensitive to the plans for information dissemination, and the breadth and depth of desired outreach.

40. A staff of 10 employees would seem a reasonable estimate (compared, for example, to the OzonAction programme) to support a centre or centres capable of providing a broad in-depth outreach across the key mitigation and adaptation areas. Assuming the provision of office space within an existing international organization/agency on an in-kind basis, staff costs would be about $800,000 - $1 million per year. To this should be added a further 30-40 per cent to make the centre operational.

41. Drawing upon consultations with the GEF and other relevant international organizations, the SBSTA may wish to recommend that funding for (an) international centre(s) as well as national and regional centres be mobilized, from several sources, including the GEF and bilateral donors. Funding for the (an) international centre(s) may be obtained through in-kind and financial contributions from the host organization, bilateral contributions from interested Parties,

and from the GEF for costs involved in assisting developing countries to access the centre. In particular, GEF funding may be provided for enhancing the capacity of national centres in non-Annex I Parties to collaborate effectively in a network of centres (see below).

B. Needs and possible means for enhancing capacity of national and regional information centres in non-Annex I Parties

42. While the concepts of an international technology information centre and enhanced national centres and networks are complementary, Parties may wish to approach the needs and possible means for enhancing capacity of national and regional information centres separately, beginning with a review of the status of activities of national centres.

43. The SBSTA may be reminded of one such review in the report entitled, *"Preliminary Review of Existing Technology Information Centres and Networks Supporting GHG Mitigation in Developing and Transition Countries"*, prepared by the Climate Technology Initiative (CTI), which was made available at the seventh session of the SBSTA.

44. Currently, assistance to enhance national technology information centres takes place principally through capacity-building, including enabling activities, at the national level, such as those already being funded by the GEF (for examples, see table above), UNDP and other development assistance programmes and agencies.

45. Regarding the needs and possible means of enhancing the capacity of national and regional information centres in non-Annex I Parties, Parties may wish to consider:

(a) Approaches to technology information needs within guidelines for national communications by non-Annex I Parties; and

(b) The merits of developing, in collaboration with the GEF, specific eligibility criteria for funding related to technology information dissemination under enabling activities or other capacity-building activities. Such criteria could encourage greater compatibility between (i) new or enhanced national and regional centres and networks and any new coordinating network at the international level; and (ii) the information services supplied and those demanded.

Annex I

RESPONSE OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY[1]

"GEF already provides support to national institutions for disseminating information about climate friendly technologies in a number of ways. First, the GEF support assists in providing information in those projects where the lack of information prevents the widespread dissemination of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies. Second, support has been provided to such institutions for establishment of appropriate national standards, economic and financial analysis, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, demonstration, and training for these technologies. Sometimes such national centres are established with GEF support, for instance to help in development of standards and certification. Third, using project development resources, GEF has supported existing national centres to assess technologies that could be the target of future GEF projects, as in the case of solar towers. And fourth, through enabling activity projects, GEF has also provided modest support for public awareness and network connectivity to international sources of climate related information.

Achieving the long-term goals of the Convention and the programmatic objectives of GEF's Operational Strategy will require widespread replication of successful projects for the abatement of greenhouse gases. We in the GEF realize that dissemination of information about successful energy efficiency and renewable energy projects will be more cost-effective than mere replication. We therefore intend to support national centres in countries where projects have been successful in sustaining global benefits, to become centres of excellence that will be repositories of information about technology, servicing other areas within the country as well as countries in the region and beyond.

Our understanding of the Convention is that resources made available through the financial mechanism are to be used *by* developing country parties to implement measures covered by Articles 4.1 and 12. This emphasis is reinforced by the GEF's Instrument, its Operational Strategy and the comparative advantage of its Implementing Agencies. Given the mandate to support in-country activities, GEF does not provide budgetary financing for the staff or activities of international organizations or other international bodies to fulfill their own mandates, even those concerned with the global environment. Such support, we feel should come from other relevant international organizations. However, the GEF would be able to provide support to developing countries to facilitate national access to the information provided by international centres, and to strengthen national capacity to work with these centres."

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[1] This annex contains the view of the GEF as expressed in its letter responding to the request from the secretariat for information. Also appended is additional information (see table), provided by the GEF, showing examples of GEF projects that include support for the dissemination of information on technologies.

Examples of GEF projects that include support for the dissemination of information on technologies

Goal of information dissemination	Examples of projects
1. To provide information which facilitates dissemination of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies	Provision of information for win-win projects: Brazil: Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency Project. Barrier removal through information dissemination and technical advisory services. China: Capacity Building for the Rapid Commercialization of Renewable Energy — support provided to the Centre for Renewable Energy Development to strengthen Information Management and Documentation capabilities.
2. To establish appropriate national standards	China: CFC-free Energy Efficient Refrigerators — provides support for the development of efficiency standards and labelling program, and consumer awareness.
3. For pre-feasibility and feasibility studies	Vietnam: (PDF-B) Geothermal Project — evaluation of temperature profiles of wells.
4. To strengthen capabilities to undertake economic and financial analysis	Bolivia: Renewable Energy-based Rural Electrification - strengthening of analytic capability in financial institutions interested in becoming involved in rural electrification.
5. To disseminate the results of demonstration projects	Malaysia: Industrial Energy Efficiency Project — includes a component for the documentation and dissemination of the results of demonstration projects.
6. To provide training	Sri Lanka: Energy Services Delivery Project — the capacity building component provides training and technical support for renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives by both the public and private sectors.
7. To support existing national centres to undertake technology assessment	Brazil, (PDF-B): Reducing the long-term costs of solar thermal power generation technologies — evaluation of all promising solar thermal technology choices.
8. To provide support for public awareness and network connectivity to international sources of climate-related information	Uzbekistan: Enabling Activity Project — activity 2 provides US$54,000 to identify and create links to international sources of information and gain information on issues and options related to climate change and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. There are many similar examples in this category.

Annex II

SUMMARIES OF RESPONSES FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Food and Agriculture Organization

The activities of FAO include 'no regrets' approaches to addressing agriculture-related vulnerabilities to both climate variability and climate change. In this capacity, FAO assembles and maintains a number of databases relevant to mitigation of agriculture-based greenhouse gases and agricultural adaptation.

2. United Nations Environment Programme - Industry and Environment (UNEP - IE)

UNEP- IE has experience and capability related to information systems to support the transfer of environmentally sound technologies through its work with the OzonAction programme in support of the Montreal Protocol and with the cleaner production technologies in support of the Basel Convention. In addition, UNEP-IE has undertaken a number of climate technology-related activities under its work programme as an implementing agency of the GEF. UNEP has asked to be considered as the focal point for an international technology information centre in collaboration with a core group of "centres of excellence", according to each organization's area of expertise, including the RISØ-UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment.

3. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNIDO has experience in setting up and providing support for national and regional information systems and networks. It has several programmes in different areas including clean production, energy and environment, science and high technology, renewable energies, and technology transfer. UNIDO is an existing focal point for industry-related activities, with in-house expertise in various industrial sub-sectors. UNIDO has indicated that it could act as a focal point, including serving as an operational hub, to support the work of an international technology information centre in collaboration with other relevant specialized agencies.

4. World Health Organization

WHO with its network of regional offices, country offices and collaborating centres, represents a significant part of the existing international institutional capacity to deliver health-related climate-relevant technology information services.

WHO has expressed interest in supporting an international climate technology information centre. It has indicated that any contribution it makes to support the work of (an) international technology information centre(s) and enhanced national and regional centres would be in the context of the plans for the proposed Inter-Agency (UN) Network on Climate and

Human Health (INCH) and any possible future follow-up on activities. The plan to establish INCH includes WMO and UNEP collaboration.

5. World Meteorological Organization

WMO is supplying information relevant to technology transfer through its network of members nationally and regionally. The WMO has indicated that it could serve as an 'international sub-centre' in specific areas (e.g. hydrology and agriculture) at moderate additional cost.

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